

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-3. (Canceled).

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim  
± 31, wherein the resulting microparticles have an average particle diameter of 0.01.  $\mu\text{m}$  to 150  $\mu\text{m}$ .

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim  
± 31, wherein the resulting microparticle is a drug carrier.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim  
± 31, wherein the resulting microparticle is a sustained-release drug carrier.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim  
± 31, wherein the dilute solution before the crosslinking reaction contains a drug, and the drug is held in microparticles obtained after the crosslinking reaction.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 7,  
wherein the crosslinking reaction does not cause drug  
denaturation even in the presence of the drug.

9-10. (Canceled).

11. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 1,  
wherein the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which  
crosslinkages are formed by reaction between hydrazide group  
and an activated carboxylic acid ester.

12-19. (Canceled).

20. (Withdrawn) The microparticle according to claim  
12, wherein the crosslinkage functional group is a mercapto  
group, and the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which  
crosslinkages are formed by disulfide formation.

21. (Canceled).

22. (Withdrawn) The microparticle according to  
claim 12, wherein the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in  
which crosslinkages are formed by reaction between a hydrazide  
group and an activated carboxylic acid ester.

23. (Canceled).

24. (Currently Amended) The method according to  
claim 23 4, wherein the resulting microparticle is a drug  
carrier.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to  
claim 24, wherein the resulting microparticle is a sustained-  
release drug carrier.

26. (Previously Presented) the method according to  
claim 25, wherein the dilute solution before the crosslinking  
reaction contains a drug, and the drug is held in the  
microparticles obtained after the crosslinking reaction.

27. (Previously Presented) The method according to  
claim 26, wherein the crosslinking reaction does not cause  
drug denaturation even in the presence of the drug.

28-30. (Canceled).

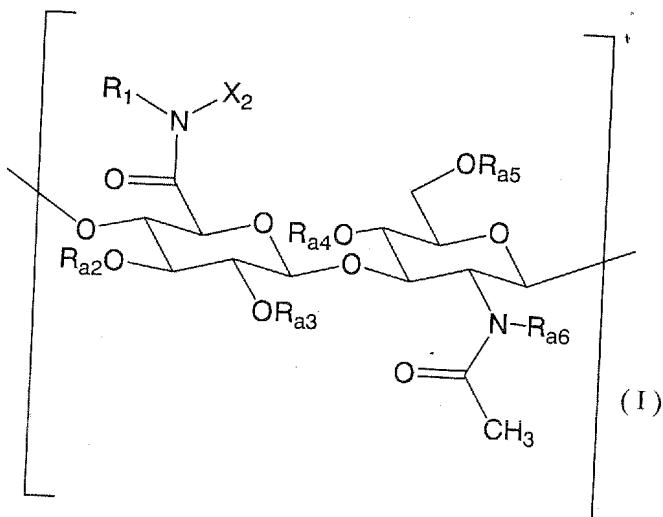
31. (New) A method for preparing crosslinked  
polysaccharide microparticles, which comprise the following  
steps:

- a) preparing a dilute solution containing (1) a polysaccharide derivative having at least one crosslinkage functional group in a range of 0.1 to 5% (w/v) and (2) a crosslinking agent;
- b) dispersing the solution by spraying to form microparticulate droplets; and
- c) concentrating the solution contained in the droplets to facilitate a crosslinking addition reaction of the polysaccharide derivative between a mercapto group and a unsaturated C-C bond;

wherein steps b) and c) are carried in a spray drying procedure;

wherein the polysaccharide derivative is a hyaluronic acid derivative comprising at least one repeating unit represented by Formula (I);

[Formula I]



Reply dated February 9, 2009

Reply to Office Action dated October 8, 2008

wherein  $X_2$  represents  $-Y_1-Q_{1-2}-N(-R_2)-Y_3-Q_2-SH$ ,  $-N(-R_2)-Y_3-Q_2-SH$ ,  $-NHCO-(CH_2)_4-CONH-NH-C(=NH)-(CH_2)_3-SH$ ,  $-(CH_2)_2-NH-C(=NH)-(CH_2)_3-SH$ , or  $-(CH_2)_2-O-(CH_2)_2-O-(CH_2)_2-NH-C(=NH)-(CH_2)_3-SH$ ,

$R_1$  represents a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  alkyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$R_{a2}$ ,  $R_{a3}$ ,  $R_{a4}$ ,  $R_{a5}$  and  $R_{a6}$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$  alkyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$  alkenyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-16}$  alkynyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-16}$  alkylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-6}$  alkenylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-16}$  alkynylcarbonyl group or  $-SO_2OH$ ,

$Y_1$  represents a single bond,  $-N(-R_3)CO-$ ,  $-N(-R_3)-$ ,  $-CO-$  or  $-CH_2CO-$ ,

$Y_2$  represents a single bond,  $-CON(-R_4)-$  or  $-N(-R_4)-$ ,

$Q_1$  represents a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  alkylene group, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  hydroxyalkylene group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$R_2$ ,  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched  $C_{1-10}$  alkyl group, a linear or

branched C<sub>1-10</sub> hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

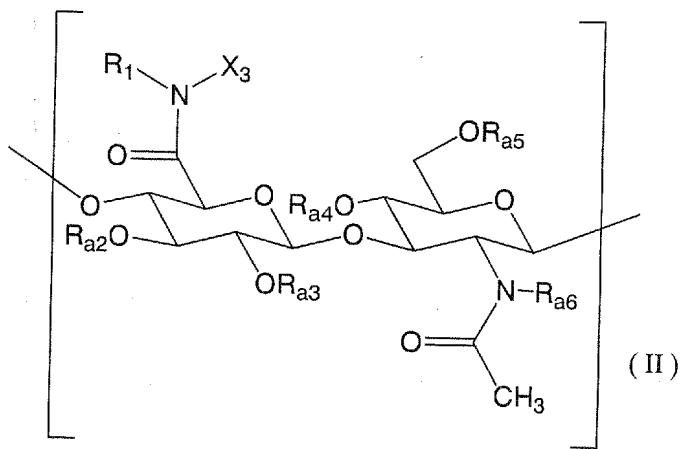
Y<sub>3</sub> represents a single bond, -CO-, -CO<sub>2</sub>-, -CH<sub>2</sub>-CH(OH)- or -CONH- and

Q<sub>2</sub> represents a linear or branched C<sub>1-10</sub> alkylene group, a linear or branched C<sub>1-10</sub> hydroxyalkylene group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

and the crosslinking agent is a compound having two or more unsaturated C-C bond-containing groups; or

the polysaccharide derivative is a hyaluronic acid derivative comprising at least one repeating unit represent by Formula (II) :

[Formula 2]



wherein X<sub>3</sub> represents -Y<sub>1</sub>, Q<sub>1</sub>-Y<sub>2</sub>-N(-R<sub>2</sub>)-Y<sub>3</sub>-Q<sub>4</sub> or -n(-R<sub>2</sub>)-Y<sub>3</sub>-Q<sub>4</sub>,

R<sub>1</sub> represents a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched C<sub>1-10</sub> alkyl group, a linear or branched C<sub>1-10</sub> hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

R<sub>a2</sub>, R<sub>a3</sub>, R<sub>a4</sub>, R<sub>a5</sub> and R<sub>a6</sub> each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl group , a linear or branched C<sub>1-6</sub> alkenyl group, a linear or branched C<sub>1-16</sub> alkynyl group, a linear or branched C<sub>1-16</sub> alkylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched C<sub>1-6</sub> alkenylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched C<sub>1-16</sub> alkynylcarbonyl group or -SO<sub>2</sub>OH,

Y<sub>1</sub> represents a single bond, -N(-R<sub>3</sub>)CO-, -N(-R<sub>3</sub>)-, -CO- or -CH<sub>2</sub>CO-,

Y<sub>2</sub> represents a single bond, -CON(-R<sub>4</sub>)- or -N(-R<sub>4</sub>)-,

Y<sub>3</sub> represents a single bond, -CO- or -CH<sub>2</sub>CO-,

Q<sub>1</sub> represents a linear or branched C<sub>1-10</sub> alkylene group, a linear or branched C<sub>1-10</sub> hydroxyalkylene group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub> and R<sub>4</sub> each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a liner or branched C<sub>1-10</sub> alkyl group, a linear or branched C<sub>1-10</sub> hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

Q<sub>4</sub> represents a linear or branched C<sub>2-10</sub> alkenyl group, a linear or branched C<sub>2-10</sub> alkynyl group,

and the crosslinking agent is a compound having two or more mercapto groups.

32. (New) The method according to claim 5, wherein the crosslinked polysaccharide microparticles are injectable.

33. (New) The method according to claim 5, wherein the drug is a protein.

34. (New) The method according to claim 6, wherein the sustained release period of the carrier is 24 hours or more.

35. (New) The method according to claim 6, wherein the sustained release period of the carrier is 5 days or more.

36. (New) The method according to claim 6, wherein the drug is released upon enzymatic digestion.